

Serial No.: 10/510,440  
Atty. Docket No.: P70107US0

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

For the purposes of line numbers herein, the numbering of the lines begins with the first line of text after the title.

On page 1, before line 1 of the text and after the title, please insert the following headings:

--BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION--.

On page 1, please amend the first paragraph beginning on line 1, as follows:

--The present invention relates to a cross-country ski binding ~~according to the preamble of claim 1~~ having a step-in mechanism--.

On page 1, before line 3, please insert the following heading:

--2. DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART--.

On page 1, before line 14, please insert the following heading:

--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--.

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On page 1, please amend the text beginning with the fourth paragraph on line 18, through the first full paragraph on page 3, which ends on line 4, as follow:

--This object is achieved by the ~~measure according to claim 1~~ a ski binding according to the present invention, in particular for cross-country skiing, that includes a sliding element displaceable in the running direction, as well as at least two spring-loaded pins movable in transverse direction for latching engagement in corresponding fittings in the tip region of the ski boot (step-in mechanism). Each of the two latching pins is carried by a molded part that is movable transversely to the running direction. Each molded part is loaded by a spring acting transversely to the running direction and is guided in one link each of the sliding element, the sliding element being displaceable in the running direction.

The sliding element may be guided in the running direction on a base plate fastened to the ski, the base plate being covered at least in the region of the tip of the ski boot by a housing in which openings are provided on either side thereof so as to receive the latching pins of the step-in mechanism. By thus dividing the control mechanism ~~according to claim 2~~, a higher resilience is achieved and, thus, pressing out

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of amounts of snow possibly present in openings of the boot fittings is achieved.

According to one construction, the sliding element, via a hinge extending transversely to the running direction, is connected to a lever that projects obliquely upwards in the running direction, having an oblique surface destined for stepping out, and a depression for insertion of the pole for opening the binding. By ~~the~~ this mode of construction according to ~~claim 3~~, a particularly economical production is possible, on the one hand, while it is ensured, on the other hand that the opening mechanism will also remain functional under difficult environmental conditions (icing up).

The base plate may be provided with a peripheral rib which engages in a corresponding groove of the housing part. In ~~this way,~~ By the measure according to claim 4, the binding mechanism is protected against the penetration of water and snow.

According to one preferred embodiment, the latching pins project on both sides of the binding from one molded part each. The molded parts are located in mirror-inverted relationship on either side of the binding and are provided with a projection extending into a link of the sliding element. By ~~the~~

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~~measure according to claim 5, the advantage of the measure according to claim 1 is intensified.~~

The link may consist of preferably triangular openings located symmetrically opposite each other about an axis extending transversely to the running direction. Each of these openings is provided with a respective guiding face on which the respective projection of the molded part is supported. By the triangular opening ~~according to claim 6~~, linear guiding of the projections of the molded part is achieved, and thus, a precise control with as little frictional resistance as possible is attained.

The molded parts are each provided with a tapped blind hole for receiving a pressure spring which is tensioned between oppositely arranged molded parts, allowing ~~The measure according to claim 7~~ allows for a particularly simple mode of construction, in particular for mounting.

Viewed in the running direction, at least two pressure springs are adjacently arranged. In this way ~~By the measure according to claim 8~~, an increased resilience is obtained, thereby making it easier for the projections of the molded parts to press out any possible accumulations of snow in the corresponding openings of the boot parts.

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Oppositely arranged projections of the molded parts are supported on oblique guiding faces in the openings of the sliding element. These openings, which serve as links, are, by displacement of the sliding element, movable towards or away from each other, respectively, and are under the action of the springs. According to this arrangement, By the measures according to claim 9, the safety of the binding is increased.

According to a further embodiment, the ski-tip side end of the sliding element or the end thereof facing away from the lever is guided in a bridge part of the housing. By the this bridge-like configuration according to claim 10, the economical mode of production can be combined with an exact linear guiding.--

On page 3, please delete line 8, constituting the word, "Therein,".

On page 3, before line 9, please insert the following heading:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS--.

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On page 3, before line 21, insert the following heading along with the paragraph following thereafter:

--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Further scope of applicability of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description given hereinafter. However, it should be understood that the detailed description and specific examples, while indicating preferred embodiments of the invention, are given by way of illustration only, since various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from this detailed description.--.

On page 5, please amend the the first full paragraph beginning on line 13, as follows:

--In the present case, the latching pins [[1]] 101 are each provided with a rounded portion at their ends facing away from each other, which rounded portion is located above that plane which extends through the longitudinal axis of the pin and, in the engaged state, in parallel to the ski upper side. The rounded portion may, however, extend as far as to the lower generatrix of the latching pins.--

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On page 6, please amend the second and third full paragraphs beginning on line 11, as follows:

--The diagonally oppositely arranged projections 110 are supported on the oblique guiding faces 112, 112' in the acute-angled corners of the openings 111, 111' of the sliding element 142. When displacing the sliding element, the projections ~~109~~ 110 are pressed towards each other under the influence of the guiding faces 112 and 112' contrary to the force of the springs 136, so as to release the pins 101 from their engaged position.

For stepping out, the skier presses the lever 130 downwards in the depression 106 with his pole. By this, the lever 130 slides along the chamfered face 105 obliquely forwards and downwards, thereby pulling the sliding element 142 forwards, whereby the two molded parts 109 are pulled together along the control curves 112, 112' and thus, the latching pins 101 release ~~relase~~ the boot.--

On page 7, after the last line, please insert the following paragraph:

--The invention being thus described, it will be apparent that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit

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and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be recognized by one skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of the following claims.--.